

Washington Rides Again

By Jeff Ives

The first U.S. president gets a new look.



Still Picture Branch of the National Archives and
Records Administration

George Washington

Third grader Erin Doherty turned the corner and gasped. A full-color statue of George Washington (1732—1799) on a horse towered over her. "He looked real," Erin told *WR News*.

Erin was on a field trip with her class to Mount Vernon, in Virginia. Mount Vernon was once Washington's home. Today, it includes a new museum about his life.

The museum features three life-size wax statues of the country's first president. One statue **depicts**, or shows, Washington at age 19. Another shows him as a military leader at age 45. At that time, he led the American army that fought the British for our nation's **independence**, or freedom. The third statue shows Washington, at age 57, being sworn in as the first U.S. president.

A team of experts used **evidence**, or proof, from history to make the statues look real. They made a computer model of Washington using

Reading Passage

earlier statues and paintings. That helped the team show Washington at different ages. This will be the first Presidents' Day [2007] that the new statues are on display.

History Comes to Life

The statues are among the many exhibits at the new museum. Visitors can also watch a high-tech movie about Washington's life. Snow seems to fall inside the theater, and the seats shake with cannon fire. "You feel that you are part of Washington's battles in the Revolutionary War," Mount Vernon education expert Ann Bay told *WR News*.

Lincoln's Ghost

George Washington isn't the only famous U.S. president to come to life recently. The people who created the new museum at Mount Vernon were inspired by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. It is located in Springfield, Illinois. The Lincoln museum is home to a "ghost library." There, the use of special effects makes Lincoln (1809—1865), the 16th president, seem to appear in the room.

Think About It
How does technology help bring history to life?